Claims

The following is a copy of Applicant's claims that identifies language being added with underlining ("___") and language being deleted with strikethrough ("—"), as is applicable:

1. (Currently amended) A binding system, comprising:

a binding assembly adapted and constructed to bind sheet material ~~together~~ together, the binding assembly including a heating element and a cooling element that is displaceable between a first position in which the cooling element is separated from the heating element to a second position in which the cooling element contacts the heating element; and

a scoring member connected to the binding assembly that is adapted and constructed to form respective score patterns in sheet material received by the system.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously presented) A binding system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the heating element comprises a thermally low-mass heating element.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) A binding system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the cooling element comprises a thermally high-mass cooling element.

6. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the scoring member is connected for motion with respect to the binding assembly.

7. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 6, further comprising the following:

at least one bore formed in the binding assembly; and

at least one guide post extending from the scoring member and received for reciprocation in the at least one bore in the binding assembly.

8. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 7, further comprising at least one resilient biasing member disposed between the scoring member and the binding assembly.

9. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 8, wherein the at least one resilient biasing member comprises at least one coil spring surrounding the at least one guide post.

10. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the scoring member comprises a scoring surface selected from a group consisting of an elongate wedge-shaped bar, a bar having a serrated edge, and a generally linear series of pointed protrusions.

11. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the binding assembly further comprises a frame assembly including a first frame member mounted generally parallel to a second frame member.

12. (Previously presented) A binding system in accordance with claim 11, wherein the heating element is mounted on the frame assembly.

13. (Previously presented) A binding system in accordance with claim 12, wherein the heating element comprises a thermally low-mass heating element that is mounted on a bottom surface of the frame assembly.

14. (Previously presented) A binding system in accordance with claim 11, wherein the cooling element has a generally parallelepipedal lower portion that extends downwardly from a generally parallelepipedal upper portion, and the lower portion of the cooling element is mounted for reciprocal movement between the first and second frame members of the frame assembly.

15. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 14, further comprising at least one biasing member secured between at least one of the frame members of the frame assembly and the upper portion of the cooling element.

16. (Original) A binding system in accordance with claim 15, wherein the at least one biasing member comprises at least one coil spring.

17-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously presented) A method of binding sheet material, comprising:

receiving a first sheet of material in a binding system;

scoring the first sheet of material;

receiving a second sheet of material in the binding system at a position adjacent the first sheet of material;

scoring the second sheet of material; and

binding the second sheet of material to the first sheet of material in the binding system.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein scoring the second sheet of material occurs substantially simultaneously with binding the second sheet of material to the first sheet of material.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein binding the second sheet of material to the first sheet of material comprises applying a heat-activated binding material to a surface of one of the first and the second sheets of material, heating the heat-activated binding material, and cooling the heat-activated binding material between the first sheet of material and the second sheet of material.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein heating the heat-activated binding material comprises heating the heat-activated binding material with a heating element of a binding system and wherein cooling the heat-activated binding material comprises cooling the heat-activated binding material with a cooling element of the binding system that is displaceable relative to the heating element.